

On The Spot

The newsletter for members of the Glasgow and South-west Scotland Branch of Butterfly Conservation

A warm welcome to all new and existing members of Glasgow & South West Scotland Butterfly Conservation. We hope you find this newsletter a useful round-up of interesting articles, key dates for your diary and important contacts. The Glasgow and South West Scotland Branch committee wishes you a wonderful butterfly and moth season!

Branch AGM and Upcoming Events

Join us online on Wednesday 5th May for our Branch AGM! It will run between 7.30pm and 8.30pm, and while there will be some AGM formalities, we hope it will be a chance for you to connect with others in the branch area. It will be held via Zoom - see our events page for booking information.

With many events cancelled or being rescheduled because of Covid-19, the best way to keep up to date with events is to visit the Glasgow & South West Scotland [webpage](#) for full details on events listings.



Purple Hairstreak, Gilles San Martin

Welcome from the Branch Chair

Welcome to the spring 2021 edition of On the Spot, and a particularly warm welcome to the members who have joined Butterfly Conservation and the branch in the last year!

The last year has been an incredibly difficult and challenging time for everyone. Unfortunately, due to the impacts of Covid-19 the branch didn't manage to put out our annual newsletter in 2020. Butterfly and moth recording was also negatively impacted by travel restrictions for most of 2020. One of the consequences of the Covid-19 lockdown has been an increased general awareness of the importance of gardens, public green spaces and access to the environment for both physical and mental health. This has resulted in a welcome increase in the number of people taking part in the Big Butterfly Count and supporting conservation organisations such as Butterfly Conservation. Thank you!

Many Local Authorities are now looking at ways to improve the management of parks, green spaces and road verges to benefit biodiversity and local people.

One positive that's come from adjusting to working from home and keeping in touch with family and friends virtually, has been the improved technology for online talks and seminars. This has enabled people who've never made it to Butterfly Conservation's Members' Day or Recorders' Gathering at Battleby to attend and hear some wonderful talks and workshops. The branch hope to host some virtual events and meetings this year.

Later this year Glasgow will host the COP26 Climate Conference, and all eyes will be on Scotland. Butterfly Conservation's Bog Squad is a shining example of an amazing conservation project delivered by skilled and knowledgeable project officers that empowers local volunteers to act for nature, and helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Bog Squad has been delivering peatland restoration work across Scotland (but mainly within the Glasgow & SW Scotland branch area) that improves habitat for butterflies, moths and other wildlife and uses nature-based solutions (re-wetting degraded peat) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions the risk of flooding following storm events. You can help by signing-up to be a Bog Squad volunteer (It's also great fun!) and by raising awareness of the importance and beauty of our peatlands. Always use peat-free compost when gardening and challenge your local garden centre to stop selling peat.

The Glasgow & SW Scotland branch Committee hope to focus our on-going conservation efforts on the priority butterfly and moth species found in the branch (see article within). If you have an idea for a conservation project focused on one of the branch priority species please do get in touch.

As I write this in early April we've already had reports of Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma on the wing, and I'm sure it won't be long before the first Orange-tips are out. There are lots of great articles inside the current edition, so I'll leave it at that, but I wish you all a great spring and summer, and I hope to see many of you at events (online) or in the field watching butterflies and moths this year!

Scott Shanks, Chair and Butterfly Recorder

Turning South Lanarkshire Purple

Thomas Stewart, Butterfly Recorder for Glasgow City & South Lanarkshire

Purple hairstreak spends the winter stage of its life as an egg that has been laid on the buds of oak trees and the caterpillar does not emerge until the first few leaf buds open in springtime. And unless any large oaks are seen to be blown down in some of our recent storms the eggs are difficult to come across. After munching its way into late spring the caterpillars of this species construct a chrysalis and do not emerge as adult butterflies until mid-July to August.



Purple Hairstreak
- image copyright
T. Stewart (South
Haugh, Hamilton)

The butterfly itself is also quite a challenge to find, as it is not one for frequenting

flowers, since it feeds off honeydew from aphids spending most of its time high in the canopy of the trees. Another great challenge comes for us in the West of Scotland, in knowing our climate and the notoriously fickle weather in July and August, it is always quite a task to find a space in the clouds never mind a sunny enough day in the right habitat to survey for this species. All of that changed in August 2020 though, as the sun smiled upon South Lanarkshire.

The first task was to think where there could be a decent stand of oak trees where the butterfly could possibly be. Cathkin Braes Park was my first thought for a place to search as I had remembered many a day spent there as a teenager birdwatching in and around the woods near the old Blairbeth golf course. I knew from memory that there were plenty of mature trees but wondered if there were any oaks among them?

On the 11th August last year the clouds broke up from late afternoon and the sun came out and the weather

looked ideal to carry out a survey. I headed out and within one hour walking among the oaks, of which there were quite a few mature ones as well as younger trees and saplings, I had found two individual Purple Hairstreaks flying in and out of the leaf canopy. One of these butterflies was within the Glasgow City boundary, but it was great to find that the other was indeed within the boundary of South Lanarkshire. This butterfly went down as the first sighting of the butterfly since 1845.

This was not the end of the purple hairstreak story for 2020 as the weather continued to be kind in mid-August. I headed down to South Haugh in Hamilton, part of the Clyde and Avon Valleys Project on Saturday 15th August 2020 to walk the transect and to check out the habitat. This was an area I had not visited before and it was not too long before I noticed a couple of mature oak trees and within a few minutes I could see a single Purple Hairstreak butterfly flying (one of two sightings that day).

When flying in the canopy it is possible to see that the butterfly has a distinctive silvery sheen to the underside of the wings, and it was easy to follow until it alighted on the leaves. Once the butterfly had landed, I was able to capture a quick image of it before it set off hurriedly to compete for territory and mating rites with its rivals.

It was a delight to find two sites and record this butterfly in South Lanarkshire but 2020 really

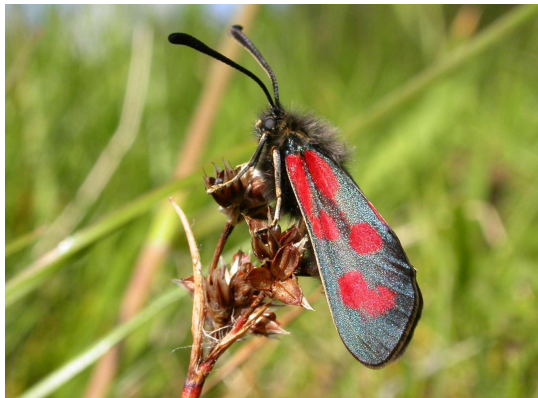


only gave us a tantalising glimpse of a few individuals and who knows, there are no doubt many other colonies to be found where the oak trees are. I have a few areas where I have noted the presence of Oak in South Lanarkshire, so these I will explore in Summer 2021 if the weather is kind once again.

Species On The Edge – an ambitious new project

SPECIES
on the **EDGE**
Gnèithean air an Oir

Led by NatureScot with funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, a programme of work is being developed to improve and secure the survival chances of over 40 nationally and internationally vulnerable species in seven landscape-scale areas around Scotland's coast and islands. Species due to benefit from the project range from terns to lacewings to toads and include Northern Brown Argus and Marsh Fritillary butterflies as well as several of the rare Burnet moths. Species on the Edge is a bold and ambitious partnership of eight of Scotland's nature conservation organisations striving to conserve Scotland's native wildlife.



Slender Scotch Burnet - © photo Tom Prescott



Northern Brown Argus - © photo Jim Asher

In 2021 the partnership aims to identify suitable sites for the programme, where we can work with local communities, projects, initiatives and landowners to benefit a range of species. The project is in the early stages of development, but it is hoped that it will lead to an exciting programme of work extending over four and a half years.

Can you help?

Butterfly Conservation Scotland hopes to conduct surveys and habitat monitoring with volunteers at key sites for coastal butterflies and moths in the summer of 2021. Full training and support will be available for volunteers. Volunteers are sought in these areas:

- Coastline of Argyll and Inner Hebridean islands including Mull (Marsh Fritillary and rare burnet moths)
- Solway Coast (Northern Brown Argus)

If you would be interested in volunteering with surveys and habitat monitoring in any of these areas this summer, please contact David Hill at dhill@butterfly-conservation.org or 01786 459813

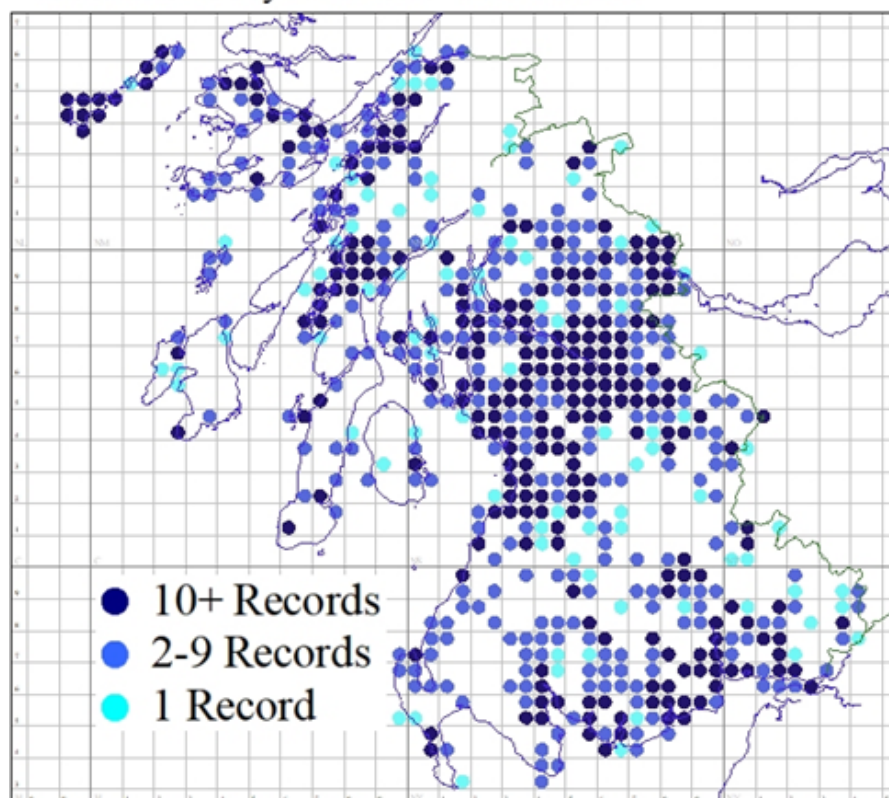
Butterfly Summary for 2020 and 2019

Scott Shanks, Glasgow & SW Scotland Branch Butterfly Record Coordinator

It's been almost 2 years since our last butterfly summary update, so this article will cover 2019 and 2020.

During 2020, we received 13,934 records of 39,396 individual butterflies (including caterpillars and eggs) from across South West Scotland. This is an impressive number considering the UK was in lockdown for much of 2020, with the majority of recorders restricted to their local home patch.

2020 Butterfly Records 5km Scale



Distribution of butterfly records in South West Scotland in 2020

Records of spring habitat-specialist species such as **Chequered Skipper** and **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** were few and far between due to the Covid-19 travel restrictions in early 2020, as relatively few active recorders live close to these species. We also received no records of **Small Blues** from the Irvine area in 2020, but we hope to carry out targeted survey work for this species in 2021.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 on the recording of spring habitat specialists, the run of good spring weather in recent years has benefitted many spring species, with **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers recovering well, and **Orange Tip** and **Speckled Woods** recorded at new sites. Analysis of records from butterfly transects and timed counts on monitored sites confirmed that 2020 was one of the top 10 best years for butterflies since records began in 1976!

One of the consequences of people staying at home was an increase in recording from urban gardens and green spaces. A record number of people also took part in the 2020 Big Butterfly Count. Some of us had more exciting garden visitors than others. In August 2020 we received photographs of a **Camberwell Beauty** that arrived in the garden of Elaine Berry in Inchinnan, Inverclyde! Fingers crossed for a few more of those in 2021!



Camberwell Beauty on buddleia, Inchinnan - © Elaine Berry

It is safe to say that 2019 was the best year (so far) for butterfly recording in South West Scotland. In 2019 we received a record-breaking 28,569 records of 153,829 individual butterflies! This was mainly due to an enormous influx of **Painted Ladies** which arrived in high numbers across the Central Belt. We received records of 72,793 Painted Ladies in 2019 which would have been just a fraction of the numbers that arrived in Scotland. The swirling clouds of Painted Ladies at coastal sites and along urban streets will be long remembered.

Distribution of butterflies recorded in South West Scotland during 2019, and coverage over the 5-year recording period 2015-2019.

Interestingly there were very few records of Painted Ladies in 2020. This species does not overwinter in the UK, and so numbers arriving in the UK each year are dependent on a combination of winter breeding conditions in North Africa and southern Europe, and good weather to allow them to make the journey northwards. 2019 was also notable for another interesting arrival in south-west Scotland: On the 24th September 2019 a **Silver-washed Fritillary** was photographed at the edge of a woodland near Haugh of Urr, north of Dalbeattie. It's possible that this was a wandering individual from Cumbria, but this could be a species to look out for in the next couple of years!

We have 33 butterfly transects in the Glasgow & South-West Scotland branch, which are walked by volunteers each week between April and September. Records from these monitored sites can be used to assess population trends of species locally and nationally, and provide an indication of the health of the environment. The data collected by our transect volunteers is used in many publications and has allowed the UK to be at the forefront of research into the impact of climate change on biodiversity. There may be an opportunity to help with a transect near you. Please get in touch if you can help.

The summary table below shows the numbers of each species recorded over the last 3 years with the earliest and latest recorded flight dates in 2020.

Summary of SW Scotland Butterfly Records 2018- 2020 (updated 05/04/21).

<i>Species</i>	<i>Number seen</i>			<i>Earliest /Latest</i>
	<i>2020</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>Sighting 2020</i>
Chequered Skipper	82	676	360	23 rd May / 18 th June
Small Skipper	49	78	19	3 rd July / 15 th Aug
Essex Skipper	0	0	0	- / -
Large Skipper	44	95	61	15 th June/ 26 th July
Dingy Skipper	-	174	70	- / -
Clouded Yellow	1	7	9	20 th September
Brimstone	0	0	0	- / -
Large White	1,257	3,345	2,928	8 th April / 11 th Oct
Small White	1,869	5,506	4,777	26 th March / 5 th Oct
Green-veined White	4,336	8,497	12,066	12 th April / 28 th Sept
Orange-tip	1,636	4,447	2,522	9 th April / 21 th June
Green Hairstreak	172	491	318	18 th April/ 12 th June
Purple Hairstreak	88	248	19	4 th July/ 6 th Sept
Small Copper	372	790	631	23 rd April / 16 th Oct
Common Blue	943	2,136	2,410	6 th June/ 15 th Sept
Holly Blue	54	95	29	10 th April / 26 th Aug
Small Blue	-	1	0	- / -
Northern Brown Argus	13	63	318	4 th July / 12 th Aug
Red Admiral	3,043	5,471	1,902	13 th March / 9 th Nov
Painted Lady	167	72,793	683	11 th April / 2 nd Oct
Small Tortoiseshell	6,708	8,618	1,317	15 th March / 1 st Oct
Peacock	5,637	16,585	7,530	18 th Jan / 8 th Dec
Comma	132	231	137	22 nd March/ 23 rd Sept

Camberwell Beauty	1	1	-	- / -
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	26	681	480	14 th May / 8 th June
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	389	1,173	1,028	27 th May / 2 nd Aug
Dark Green Fritillary	231	602	393	19 th June / 6 th Sept
High Brown Fritillary	-	-	1	- / -
Silver-washed Fritillary	-	1	-	- / -
Marsh Fritillary	10	311	335	21 st May / 14 th June
Speckled Wood	430	834	763	24 th April / 10 th Oct
Wall	242	496	775	25 th April / 20 th Sept
Grayling	136	330	242	2 nd July / 6 th Sept
Mountain Ringlet	31	405	175	3 rd July / 6 th Aug
Scotch Argus	2,373	1,445	1,881	21 st July / 6 th Sept
Ringlet	4,313	9,070	7,291	2 nd June / 20 th Aug
Meadow Brown	3,310	4,244	2,383	9 th June / 18 th Sept
Large Heath	12	317	229	16 th June / 18 th Aug
Small Heath	563	3,505	2,791	11 th May / 31 st Aug
Monarch	-	-	9	-

During 2020 we received 13,931 records of 39,391 individual butterflies (including larvae and eggs). A further 2,141 historic records were received during 2020 (mostly from 2019 & 2018).

Some online recording resources:

It's fantastic to see how popular biological recording has become and how many people now regularly send in their butterfly records.

Please submit your butterfly records to [iRecord](#). You can also submit butterfly records directly from your smartphone using the [iRecord Butterflies phone app](#).

A good introduction to online recording is the [Big Butterfly Count](#) which runs for 3 weeks each summer. However the range of species that you can record during the Big Butterfly Count is quite limited.

Butterfly records from your garden can be submitted through [Butterfly Conservation's Garden Butterfly Survey](#) website.

For those walking a weekly Butterfly Transect or doing regular Timed-Counts of your chosen site, you can submit records [here](#).

If you would like to contact your local Butterfly Recorder (the person who collates, checks and verifies all butterfly records before they go into the database), please [visit here](#).

Many thanks to everyone that sent in their records! Keep up the great work! Recording really is the key to species conservation. Without knowing what is out there, we can't take the next steps in protecting important sites, or identifying trends in distribution and abundance. I hope you all have a fantastic butterfly-filled year ahead!

Species of Conservation Priority in South-West Scotland

Scott Shanks, Chair & Butterfly Record Coordinator for the Glasgow & SW Scotland branch

Thanks to the work of Dr Tom Prescott and David Hill of Butterfly Conservation Scotland, we have a Glasgow and South-West Scotland branch priority lepidoptera list.

The list highlights species of butterflies, macro-moths and micro-moths found within the branch area that should be the top priorities for our on-going conservation and monitoring work. The specific conservation interventions required for each species can vary considerably. In all cases more recording and data on their distribution would be helpful. In the case of some of the micro-moths the ecology and habitat requirements for some species may be poorly understood, and so projects to identify foodplants used by caterpillars or identify threats at specific sites may be required.



Slender Scotch Burnet moth - © Adam Gor

The production of this branch priority list for the first time will enable us to focus branch efforts and funds to support those species most at risk.

If you can help with some targeted recording of these species or have an idea for a project that could help any of our priority species, please do get in touch.

Butterfly Conservation Scotland's Tom Prescott has been running online workshops this year on various Scottish priority species. Keep an eye on the [branch pages](#) for details of future events and workshops.



Marsh Fritillary - © Iain Leach

<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Priority</u>
Water-avens Pigmy	<i>Stigmella pretiosa</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Pied Clothes	<i>Nemapogon picarella</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C

Highland Ermel	<i>Kessleria saxifragae</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Lost Ermel	<i>Kessleria fasciapennella</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority A
Arctic Diamond-back	<i>Plutella haasi</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority B
Oban Fanner	<i>Acrolepiopsis betulella</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority B
Mountain Flat-body	<i>Levipalpus hepatariella</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority B
Northern Neb	<i>Xystophora pulveratella</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Rock Groundling	<i>Scrobipalpa murinella</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority A
Atlantic Groundling	<i>Scrobipalpa clintoni</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Petty-whin Case-bearer	<i>Coleophora genistae</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Highland Dwarf	<i>Elachista eskoi</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Scotch Dwarf	<i>Elachista orstadii</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Short-winged Plume	<i>Pselnophorus heterodactyla</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority B
Dover Twist	<i>Periclepsis cinctana</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority A
Northern Button	<i>Acleris lipsiana</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Highland Bell	<i>Epinotia crenana</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Elgin Shoot Moth	<i>Rhyacionia logaea</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Inverness Piercer	<i>Pammene luedersiana</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Goat Moth	<i>Cossus cossus</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Welsh Clearwing	<i>Synanthedon scoliaeformis</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority A
Forester	<i>Adscita statices</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Transparent Burnet	<i>Zygaena purpuralis</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority A
Slender Scotch Burnet	<i>Zygaena loti</i> ssp. <i>scotica</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority A
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>	Butterfly	Medium Priority C
Chequered Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>	Butterfly	High Priority A
Large Heath	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>	Butterfly	Medium Priority C
Mountain Ringlet	<i>Erebia epiphron</i>	Butterfly	Medium Priority C
Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>	Butterfly	Medium Priority C
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	Butterfly	High Priority A

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>	Butterfly	Medium Priority C
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	Butterfly	High Priority A
Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>	Butterfly	High Priority B
Northern Brown Argus	<i>Aricia artaxerxes</i>	Butterfly	High Priority B
White-spotted Sable	<i>Anania funebris</i>	Micro-moth	High Priority B
Mountain Pearl	<i>Udea uliginosalis</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Scotch Pearl	<i>Udea decrepitalis</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Highland Grey	<i>Eudonia alpina</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Northern Grass-veneer	<i>Catoptria furcatellus</i>	Micro-moth	Medium Priority C
Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth	<i>Hemaris tityus</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Yellow-ringed Carpet	<i>Entephria flavicinctata</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Argent & Sable	<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Slender-striped Rufous	<i>Coenocalpe lapidata</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Heath Rivulet	<i>Perizoma minorata</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Barred Tooth-striped	<i>Trichopteryx polycommata</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Rannoch Brindled Beauty	<i>Lycia lapponaria</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Belted Beauty	<i>Lycia zonaria</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Bordered Grey	<i>Selidosema brunnearia</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Ringed Carpet	<i>Cleora cinctaria</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Small Chocolate-tip	<i>Clostera pigra</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Beautiful Snout	<i>Hypena crassalis</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Dew Moth	<i>Setina irrorella</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Lyme Grass	<i>Photedes elymi</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Sword-grass	<i>Xylena exsoleta</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Silvery Arches	<i>Polia hepatica</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Grey	<i>Hadena caesia</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Shore Wainscot	<i>Mythimna litoralis</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C

Portland Moth	<i>Actebia praecox</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Coast Dart	<i>Euxoa cursoria</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Sand Dart	<i>Agrotis ripae</i>	Macro-moth	High Priority B
Square-spotted Clay	<i>Xestia rhomboidea</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C
Cousin German	<i>Protolampra sobrina</i>	Macro-moth	Medium Priority C

Branch moth summary for 2019 and 2020

Compiled by Paul Tatner (VC76 recorder) using notes from VC recorders

The SW Scotland newsletter encompasses nine Vice counties (**Dumfries & Galloway: 72, Ayrshire: 75, Lanarkshire including Greater Glasgow: 77, Stirlingshire: 86, Argyllshire: 98, Dunbartonshire: 99, Inverclyde & Renfrewshire: 76, Islay, Jura & Colonsay, Arran, Cumbraes: 100, Kintyre: 101**) and further information relating to the moths of the area may be found on the revised [website](#). Some of the annual moth highlights are reported here based on synopses provided by vice county recorders, whose contact details for future moth sightings may be found on the website cited previously.

2019

VC99: Dunbartonshire Recorder: Alan Kerr

The following were new records in VC99 during 2019: *Evergestis pallidata* and White-pinion spotted (*Lomographa bimaculata*) recorded by Richard Sutcliffe, the latter species apparently enjoying a range extension throughout SW Scotland in the past few years.



Evergestis pallidata
63.060 BF1358
© photo Richard Sutcliffe



Brussels Lace *Cleorodes lichenaria*
70.288 BF1945
© photo Sam Buckton

Sam Buckton has been busy on the RSPB reserve at Loch Lomond, where 3 new species for VC99 were discovered i.e. *Plodia interpunctilla*, *Carpatolechia decorella* and Brussels Lace (*Cleorodes lichenaria*). The Indian meal moth (*P. interpunctilla*) is a pyralid that is a widespread pest species often found in food warehouses. *Carpatolechia decorella* has a distinctive black bar at the base of the forewing (not particularly obvious in the photo), but it's necessary to consider the 2nd segment of the labial palps to distinguish it from a similar species. Although fairly widespread it is not that common, the larvae feeding in a folded oak (*Quercus spp*) or dogwood (*Cornus spp*) leaf. The Brussels Lace *Cleorodes lichenaria* is most likely to be found further south (SW England, S Wales, & Ireland) as it is locally distributed in Scotland and as its name suggests the larvae feed on lichens rather than leaves.



Carpatolechia decorella

35.147 BF767

© photo Sam Buckton



Indian meal moth *Plodia interpunctella*

62.062 BF1479

© photo Sam Buckton

Stan Campbell as usual had a few firsts along the River Leven and at Ross Aber including *Coleophora deauratella*, *Gypsonoma sociana* and *Grapholita janthinana*. The Coleophorid is one of those with bronzy metallic forewings (not shown), most commonly found in southern England, but as the larvae feed on Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), it shouldn't be short of food. *G. sociana* has a fairly distinctive triangle on the lower edge of each forewing, which in the resting moth are revealed as a 'black diamond' when looking from the dorsal view at the two wings together – not that obvious in the photo though. Its larvae are to be found on poplar (*Populus spp*) and willow (*Salix spp*) twigs.



Gypsonoma sociana

49.281 BF1168

© photo Stan Campbell



Grapholita janthinana

49.359 BF1245

© photo Stan Campbell

VC98: Argyllshire & VC101: Kintyre Recorder: David Hill

Brindled Beauty *Lycia hirtaria* is found widely throughout the central and northern Highlands of Scotland but is scarcer in the west and had not previously been recorded in Argyllshire. Andrew Masterman reported one from the Glencoe Rothamsted trap in spring 2019, a first for VC98 Argyll.



Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra*

72.041 BF2051

© photo David Jardine

The Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra* was also new a species for Argyll in July 2019, with one male (only the yellow females have the spots, and even then one spot may be hidden by the closed wings) light-trapped in mid-Argyll by David Jardine. It has been suggested that several others were found on the Isle of Bute at around the same time, so this record may represent an expansion in range or a migration event from the SW coast of England and Wales. The first Copper

Underwing *Amphipyra pyramidea* for Argyll (VC98) was recorded in Cowal by Steve Petty in 2019 and White pinion-spotted *Lomographa bimaculata* continued its spread across Scotland with Ian Fisher recording a couple in VC101 Kintyre in June 2019.



Copper Underwing *Amphipyra pyramidea*

73.062 BF2297

© photo Steve Petty

VC76: Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde **Recorder:** Paul Tatner



Epinotia bilunana
449.254 BF11333
© photo Paul Tatner



Glaucous Shears *Papestra biren*
73.272 BF2162
© photo Gary Williamson

There was a specimen of *Epinotia bilunana* caught in Kilbarchan, which is probably fairly common, as its larvae feed on birch catkins, but it hasn't been found in the VC since back in the 1980's when there were a few examples.

Gary Williamson had some micros that had not been reported since back in the 1980's by John Morgan, including; *Argyresthia laevigatella*, *Cochylis nana*, and *Cochylis atricapitana*, and a Glaucous Shears *Papestra biren*.

VC86: Stirlingshire **Recorder:** Martin Culshaw

Chrysoclista linneella - 10th and 23rd August 2019, Calendar Park, Falkirk. This notable first Scottish record involved a swarm and frass on lime trees discovered by John Charles and Geoffrey Hancock. Previously, it has only been recorded as far north as Cumbria (per Mark Young). As the photograph below shows, it is a distinctive species exhibiting lead-like blobs on a bright orange background. Generally found in SE England, extending as far north as Yorkshire and S. Wales, where it is associated with Lime (*Tilia* sp.) trees, the larvae feeding under the bark.



Chrysoclista linneella
30.005 BF903
© photo John Charles / Geoffrey Hancock



The Nutmeg *Anarta trifolii*
73.255 BF2145
© photo David Bryant

Found in the region during 2019, including The Nutmeg *Anarta trifolii* by David Bryant in Bridge of Allan (31/07/19). It is normally found in SE England, although records have occurred further north even into Scotland, but it is scarce, inhabiting waste ground and agricultural land, the larvae feeding on Orache (*Atriplex*) and Goosefoot (*Chenopodium*).

An adventive species, the Azalea Leaf Miner *Caloptilia azaleella*, was another first for the VC found during August 2019, in the Bridge of Allan by David Bryant. It has a largely brown forewing, with a yellow band along the costal margin and as the name suggests it was probably introduced with azalea and rhododendron plants in which the larva forms a cone by rolling the leaf downwards from the tip, although it is mostly found in southern Britain.



Azalea Leaf Miner *Caloptilia azaleella*
15.007 BF285
© photo David Bryant

Dingy Footman *Eilema griseola*
72.044 BF2044
© photo Martin Culshaw

Several notable species were found in Killearn during 2019 by Martin Culshaw; including the Dingy Footman *Eilema griseola* (26/7/19 – new to the VC), the Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (29/6/19 – only the 2nd for the county, the first occurring in 2017) which is an immigrant species from southern Europe and N. Africa, the caterpillars feeding on Knotgrass (*Polygonum* spp) and Dock (*Rumex* spp), the Thyme Pug *Eupithecia distinctaria* (17/6/19 – not recorded here since 2012, and very rare in the area), and the Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* (29/6/19) which was last recorded in the county back in 2011. The Rush Veneer is another migrant species often found in large numbers on the coast (May to September), the long, narrow outline when the moth is at rest aids identification to its otherwise rather drab appearance.



The Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria*
70.038 BF1716
© photo Martin Culshaw



Thyme Pug *Eupithecia distinctaria*
70.172 BF1843
© photo Martin Culshaw



Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella*
63.052 BF1398
© photo Martin Culshaw I

The Pearly Underwing *Peridroma saucia* was recorded by Tony Rogers during August 2019, in Stirling, the first one in the VC since 2011. It is another migrant species that may turn up anywhere, but it is usually more commonly found in southern Britain (Sept/Oct) – not illustrated.

2020

VC99: Dunbartonshire Recorder: Alan Kerr

Luke Wake recorded *Agonopterix yeatiana* at the RSPB site at Loch Lomond by Gartocharn, which was a new record for the county. It has a scattered, but widespread distribution across Britain, tending to be more coastal in Scotland and Ireland, adults appearing in August, but then hibernating over winter to appear again in mild spring weather. Larvae feed on various umbelliferous plants.



Agonopterix yeatiana
32.035 BF714
© photo Luke Wake



Buff Ermine *Spilosoma lutea*
72.019 BF2061
© photo Lorna McHardy

Lorna McHardy recorded and photographed a Buff Ermine *Spilosoma lutea* at Shandon, which was a first for the VC.



Lunar underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa* - Unusual markings
73.193 BF2270
© photo Lorna McHardy



Lunar underwing *Omphaloscelis lunosa* - Pale form
73.193 BF2270
© photo Lorna McHardy

John Clark, who has been threatening to moth trap for a few years built a Skinner trap during the Covid lockdown and was rewarded with Peacock Moth *Macaria notata*, which although not rare, was another county first (not illustrated).

A couple of unusual records were received from Lorna, who trapped 3 Lunar Underwings *Omphaloscelis lunosa* during 2020 at Kilcreggan, when previously there had been a single record back in 1975. The identity of the unusual form (shown below) was confirmed by Roy Leverton. Lorna also managed to capture some excellent pictures of egg-laying and the subsequent hatchlings of a Large Yellow underwing (see below).



Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba* - Laying eggs
73.193 BF2270
© photo Lorna McHardy



Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba* - Eggs and hatchlings
73.193 BF2270
© photo Lorna McHardy

Luke Wake had the second record of *Bucculatrix nigricomella* at RSPB Loch Lomond, the first being in 1901.

VC86: Stirlingshire Recorder: Martin Culshaw

The Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk moth *Hemaris tityus* is an immigrant species from Europe that sometimes visits Britain in large numbers, usually when there is an extended period of warm weather, or a flow of air from the south. The 2nd and 3rd record of this species for the VC occurred in 2020, one in Buchlyvie and the other in Stirling, which are thought to reflect similar occurrences in neighboring vice counties.

A colony of 150+ Narrow-bordered 5-Spot Burnets *Zygaena trifolii* was seen at The Kelpies site, Falkirk by Marion Kingsley-Dunn, which is most encouraging, as previously the only record was of a single individual at Bonnybridge, back in 2007. This species seems to have been increasing since the 1980's and shows signs of extending its southerly distribution into SE Scotland (Moth Atlas, 2019).

There were two new micros for VC86: *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* (19th May, Killearn) which is reputedly a very early riser, flying at sunrise around Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and Hawthorn *Crataegus* spp. on which the larvae feed, and *Blastodacna hellerella* (13th June, Killearn), which also seems to associate with Hawthorn as the larvae burrow into the berries, both recorded by Martin Culshaw.



Semioscopis steinkellneriana
30.002 BF667
© photo Martin Culshaw





Blastodacna hellerella
39.001 BF905
© photo Martin Culshaw

A Grass Emerald *Pseudoterpna pruinata* was found on the 15th July (Martin Culshaw), only the second record for the county, since the original captured 18 years ago. It is thought to be a declining species across Britain, but has a local distribution in SW Scotland (Moth Atlas, 2019). The adults fly in June and July, and the larvae feed on Petty Whin (*Genista anglica*), Gorse (*Ulex* spp) and Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*).



Dark Tussock *Dicallomera fascelina*
70.016 BF2027
© photo Martin Culshaw

A Dark Tussock *Dicallomera fascelina* was another second showing of an adult in the VC (first was 18 years ago), this time on the 13th June in Killearn (Martin Culshaw). It is largely resident on moors and heaths, being widely distributed in the eastern half of Scotland.

	
<p><i>Palpita vitrealis</i> - immigrant species 63.048 BF1408 © photo Martin Culshaw</p>	<p>Wood Sage plume moth <i>Capperia britanniodactylus</i> 45.028 BF1494 © photos Martin Culshaw</p>

Palpita vitrealis is widespread in Europe, appearing most frequently in Britain in the south and south-west of England. It occurred for the third time in the county during 2020, this time on Buddleia (23rd August, Killearn, Martin Culshaw).

A Wood Sage Plume colony (50+) was found in June, SW Stirlingshire by Martin Culshaw and Chris McInerny, previous to which there had only been a single record of the species. Although widely distributed across Britain, it is quite local. The larvae feed on Wood sage (*Teucrium scorodonia*), where they bite through the stems, creating a drooping appearance to the plant thus assisting location of the species. Adults are on the wing in June and July after dusk, spending the daylight hidden amongst the vegetation.

VC98: Argyllshire and **VC101:** Kintyre **Recorder:** David Hill

One of the star finds of 2020 in Argyll and Kintyre was a Devon Carpet *Lampropteryx otregiata* recorded in north Kintyre (VC101) in August by David Jardine and Ian Fisher, a long way north of previous Scottish records which were in Dumfries & Galloway. It is reported to be rapidly spreading north through damp woodland since its first Scottish record in 2013 (Moth Atlas, 2019)


<p>Devon Carpet <i>Lampropteryx otregiata</i> 70.104 BF1751 © photo David Jardine</p>

A few interesting migrants were reported in 2020 with a Convolvulus Hawkmoth *Agrius convolvuli* in mid-Argyll (David Jardine), a Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* near Oban (Tom Prescott) and a Nutmeg *Anarta trifolii* in Cowal (Steve Petty) which was new to VC98 Argyll.



Convolvulus Hawkmoth *Agrius convolvuli*

69.004 BF1972
© photo David Jardine



The Nutmeg *Anarta trifolii*

73.255 BF2145
© photo Steve Petty

The nationally scarce micro-moth *Ectoedemia weaveri* was found for the first time in Argyll on Rannoch Moor in April 2019. This moth mines leaves of Cowberry *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*. In the same area, a few cases of *Coleophora genistae* were found at the same spot they had been recorded at nearly 30 years previously, the furthest west known location for the species in Scotland. This nationally scarce micro-moth feeds as a larva on Petty Whin *Genista anglica*, creating a funky-looking case constructed from Petty Whin leaves for protection.



Coleophora genistae
Larval case on Petty Whin
37.041 BF546
© photo David Hill



Ectoedemia weaveri
Leaf mine on Cowberry
4.077 BF43
© photo David Hill

VC76: Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde **Recorder:** Paul Tatner

The most exciting find was of a micro species, that was not only new for the vice county, but also a first for Scotland! It was caught and identified by Paul Mapplebeck in his garden in Elderslie during June, but he was skeptical of its

authenticity, so he asked Mark Young, who contacted Steven Palmer who runs the Gelechiid Recording Scheme. The beast was then sent to Steve to have its genitals examined and was thus pronounced definitively as *Aproaerema cinctella* (it having been moved to another genus in the interim – it's all go with the Gelechiid taxonomists these days! NB - UKmoths is still showing the species with its 'old' name *Syncopacma cinctella*. Steve Palmer also very kindly provided a slightly more photogenic portrait of Paul's excellent discovery (see below).

Apparently, the nearest previous records of this species were from South Cumbria and Northumberland, although it had also strayed across to Northern Ireland, so the VC76 record represents a really good find and a significant range extension – well done Paul Mapplebeck! Steven told us that the species uses common Bird's foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* and may thus be overlooked as a resident, and while it may be a migrant, there is only one species in the genus known to be migratory, most being largely sedentary species.

An intriguing record was provided by Rikki and Duncan McKay, who found another new micro for the VC in the form of an adventive species, *Duponchelia fovealis* at their home in Kilbarchan. A picture of this was sent to Mark Young who confirmed its identification. A few of these have turned up in Scotland according to [Mark Cubitt's maps](#) but none since 2018. It is unclear how it arrived in Kilbarchan, probably imported with cultivated plants – the first British record was found indoors back in 1996. It has the potential to become a pest in plant nurseries, as reported on the continent.



~~*Syncopacma cinctella*~~
Aproaerema cinctella
35.002 BF849
© photo Paul Mapplebeck



~~*Syncopacma cinctella*~~
Aproaerema cinctella
35.002 BF849
© photo Steven Palmer

An unusual micro with white 'eye-cup' was found in Kilbarchan (Paul Tatner, 2/06/2020) and identified as *Bucculatrix nigricomella* by Nigel Richards. Its larvae leaf mine the Ox-eye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, so it is a little surprising that it hasn't been recorded in the VC since back in the late 1980, as the host plant is very common.



Duponchelia fovealis
63.046 BF1403
© photo Paul Tatner





Bucculatrix nigricomella
14.002 BF266
© photo Paul Tatner

There was also a rather difficult identification for a specimen supplied by John Sweeney from Howwood, who has reported the only records of Dark Chestnut *Conistra ligula* in the VC, one on the 15th Oct 2017 and then again on 8th Nov 2020. A photo of the latter is shown below, in which the specimen exhibits the correct 'jizz' for a Dark Chestnut but lacks the characteristic white spots so clearly apparent in Roy Leverton's photo of the species. This is something to look out for in the area in forthcoming autumn trapping sessions.

	
<p>Dark Chestnut <i>Conistra ligula</i> 73.195 BF2259 © photo John Sweeney</p>	<p>Dark Chestnut <i>Conistra ligula</i> 73.195 BF2259 © photo Roy Leverton</p>

Another interesting macro caught in a garden in Kilbarchan early in the season (April) was a Red Swordgrass *Xylena vetusta*, showing the characteristic dark tarsi (see below) and confirmed by Roy Leverton. It had overwintered and was probably on route back to the more typical moorland habitat.

	
<p>Red Swordgrass <i>Xylena vetusta</i> 73.209 BF2241 © photo Paul Tatner</p>	<p>Red Swordgrass <i>Xylena vetusta</i> 73.209 BF2241 © photo Paul Tatner</p>

*Late submission to summary

VC77: Lanarkshire Recorder: Richard Weddle

On July 26th 2018 Alan Winthrop found a micro-moth which he provisionally identified as *Clavigesta purdeyi* (Durrant, 1911) in his greenhouse in Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire, Scotland (Fig. 1). It had probably been attracted into the greenhouse by an ultraviolet light.

A photograph of the specimen was submitted to Dr Mark Young and Nigel Richards who jointly verified it on the grounds of flight time, size, and head colour compared with the similar *Clavigesta posticana*, *C. turionella* and *C. logaea*. On 12th August 2020, a second specimen occurred in a moth trap at Glasgow Botanic Gardens (pers. obs.). This was a female and was confirmed from the genitalia by Nigel Richards. The list of Scottish micro-moths maintained by Dr Young on behalf of Butterfly Conservation did not include this species, which is therefore an addition to the Scottish fauna.



Fig. 1. Pine leaf-mining moth *Clavigesta purdeyi*, Bishopbriggs, East Dunbartonshire, Scotland; forewing length 6 mm. (Photo: Alan Winthrop)

C. purdeyi has been given the common name pine leaf-mining moth; the larva mines the needles of Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Corsican pine (*P. nigra subsp. laricio*), lodgepole pine (*P. contorta*) etc. and is “local” in coniferous woodland in northern England (Sterling et al., 2012). The same source mentions that it seemed to be expanding its range in England, and had been recorded for the first time in Ireland, so its arrival in Scotland is perhaps not unexpected. It is very likely to be present in Dumfries and Galloway and/or the Scottish Borders.

There is a mature stand of pines near to the Bishopbriggs location in Meadowburn, and several long-established mixed woodlands within 1 km, such as Cadder Wilderness plantation, and the woodlands of Cawder House (now surrounding a golf course). Glasgow Botanic Gardens has a collection of various *Pinus* spp.

REFERENCE

Sterling, P., Parsons, M., & Lewington, R. (2012). Field Guide to the Micromoths of Great Britain and Ireland. British Wildlife Publishing, Dorset

Get in touch with your local moth recorder: If you want to contact the person who collates, checks and verifies all moth records in your area, please [visit here](#).

Moth Kota: a Sculpture to attract both humans and moths

Artist-researcher Hannah Imlach in collaborative partnership with RSPB Loch Lomond - September 2020



Hannah Imlach, fieldwork photography August 2020, Angle Shades, RSPB Loch Lomond

Moth Kota is a sculptural artwork. It is designed to enable human-moth encounters and encourage contact with these captivating but often overlooked creatures.

Moth Kota emerges from desk and field-based studies by visual artist Hannah Imlach, undertaken as part of her doctoral research at the University of Edinburgh (School of Geosciences). Hannah's PhD studentship is the first Arts and Humanities Research Council funded project in collaborative partnership with RSPB and focuses on the development of site-specific artworks for its Loch Lomond Nature Reserve. It explores the roles artwork can play in encouraging new forms of visitor engagement with wildlife and how creative practice can positively contribute to nature conservation strategies. A short introductory film on Hannah's doctoral research can be viewed [here](#).

This proposal – initially for internal circulation within the RSPB – is designed as an introduction to a specific artwork idea, and as a call for potential organisational collaborators. *Moth Kota* is to be the first in a series of temporary artworks sensitively sited within the reserve. Hannah is keen to work with the RSPB to develop a live public event as part of this artwork, and welcomes discussion and suggestions particularly from staff with an interest in the lifeworlds of moths, or involved in visitor experience, engagement and event design.

The proposed artwork has three connected components:

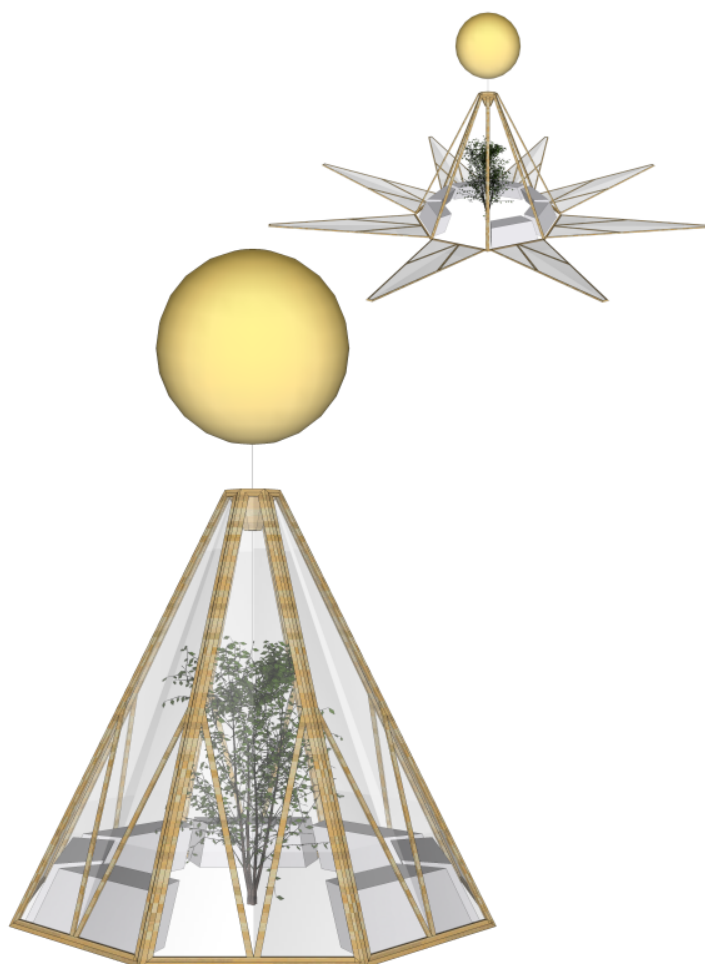
- as a sculptural shelter, installed temporarily on-site, designed as a large walk-in (and fly-in) space attractive to humans and to moths
- as a public event inviting people to engage with the sculpture and have a 'close encounter' with the moths of Loch Lomond Nature Reserve (potentially taking place June 2021)
- as a documented event (in still and moving image) and an artwork in its own right, exhibited and promoted among visual art, nature conservation and academic research communities

And just what is the *Moth Kota*?

The sculpture takes its inspiration from the funnel-shaped forms within moth traps, and traditional pyramidal shelters such as the Finnish *Kota* or *Goahti* (Northern Sámi). It is designed as a space for gathering and observation, stimulating connection with other species. Rather than sitting around a fire, as is traditional in a *kota*, the *Moth Kota* will have circular seating arranged around a centrepiece of known moth food plants and night-flowering pollinators. The external sides will be stretched with a fine gauze fabric. A large light source positioned above the structure will illuminate the internal space. The entire structure will be modular, allowing the sides to be lowered and moths released. Hannah anticipates the artwork will be accessed by the public in small groups, or 'bubbles', allowing the work to be experienced despite potential social distancing restrictions.

Hannah developed this artwork idea during the 2020 lockdown in dialogue with Luke Wake, assistant warden at Loch Lomond Nature Reserve, and has since had opportunities to learn moth trapping techniques on-site. She plans to develop the design, informed by ongoing fieldwork over the coming year, and learning from RSPB expertise in scientific research and public engagement activities.

If the artwork or subject matter is of interest, Hannah would welcome hearing from you at:
h.k.imlach@sms.ed.ac.uk



Hannah Imlach, *Moth Kota*, 3D virtual model, September 2020

Website

We have an excellent website packed with information – find out which moths are on the wing near you or how to submit your records. Visit us [here](#).

Facebook

Thanks to volunteers, our [Facebook page](#) is kept up to date with beautiful photos and facts all year round. It's also the best place to stay informed on events occurring in the branch. and why not join our [Butterflies & Moths of West & South West Scotland](#) group for ID help and discussion.

Twitter and Instagram

We're present on Twitter and Instagram too, so if you prefer to use these platforms, give us a follow us at [@BC_SWScotland](#). You can also view our news feed without having an account!